

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SAFETY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

### **REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2027/28**

#### **REPORT BY LEAD OFFICER FOR THE PANEL**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides the Panel with an update on the council's medium term financial plan and summarises a number of potential saving options relevant to the remit of this Panel to address the council's budget gap over the three year period 2023/24 to 2025/26, including responses from the WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Phase 2 consultation.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the outcome of the WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Phase 2 consultation and comments, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2;
2. Notes the updated revenue budget gap of £47.6 million, demonstrating the hugely challenging financial position facing the council over the next five years;
3. Notes work undertaken to date by officers in developing the five year revenue financial plan for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28;
4. Notes officer saving options, relevant to the remit of the Panel, as set out in Appendix 4 of the report;
5. Notes the Integrated Relevance Assessments for all proposed savings options and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) where the options are assessed as having a potential impact on a protected group or characteristic, as set out in Appendix 5;
6. Notes that following conclusion of the PDSPs to consider potential saving options, the Head of Finance and Property Services will present a report to full Council on 21 February 2023 containing a five year revenue financial plan and a three year detailed revenue budget for 2023/24 to 2025/26.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Being honest, open and accountable, making the best use of resources, focusing on our customers' needs and working in partnership.
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	The council is required to approve a balanced revenue budget for each financial year. Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) best practice guidance recommends medium term financial plans are prepared for at least five years in duration, with detailed budgets prepared for at least three years. This best practice is a requirement of the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice, which the council has complied with from 1 April 2021.
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	No implications at this stage.

<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	Ongoing restraint in relation to government grant funding inevitably has implications for the council's budget and performance.
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	The revenue budget provides resources necessary to help deliver the Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIP), Corporate Plan and council activities. Effective prioritisation of resources is essential to achieving key outcomes.
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	<p>Scottish Government grant funding has not been sufficient since 2007/08 to meet the increasing costs and demands for services.</p> <p>Based on current central planning scenarios, it is forecast that West Lothian Council may have a budget gap of £47.6 million over the five year period 2023/24 to 2027/28 and £35.8 million over the three year period 2023/24 to 2025/26.</p>
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	This report forms part of the ongoing process of briefing elected members on the council's financial position and budget strategy.
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	The council received 7,605 responses and over 36,000 comments from the first two phases of the Your Council, Your Say 2028 consultation. The Corporate Management Team has been consulted on this report.

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D.1 Background**

Since 2007/08 the council has had to deliver considerable savings to balance the budget whilst funding has been constrained. It is within this context of delivering over £150 million of savings from 2007/08 to 2022/23 that the council looks ahead to another financially challenging five year period.

The following financial planning principles were agreed by Council Executive in June 2018. In addition it was agreed that PDSPs should be scheduled, in advance of the revenue plan for future years being reported to full Council, to consider the substance of budget saving options.

- The council should continue to have a five year financial plan, aligned with political administrations, and three year detailed revenue budgets.
- Estimated budget gaps for at least three years should be reported to elected members before local elections.
- The Corporate Plan and revenue, capital and treasury plans should continue to be considered and agreed at the same Council meeting.
- Future five year financial plans should be subject to public consultation.
- Public consultations on the five year plan should cover priorities, taxation and saving options.

In October 2021, Partnership and Resources PDSP and Council Executive considered an initial update on the revenue financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28. This included an initial estimate of budget scenarios and budget gaps. Council Executive agreed that officers should continue to implement the process to develop a new five year financial plan.

Council in February 2022 and Council Executive in June 2022 considered updated budget scenarios following the publication of the 2022 Scottish Spending Review. On 6 December 2022, Council Executive noted a revised central scenario gap of £57.7 million for 2023/24 to 2027/28 with considerable risks around the high level assumptions used to calculate the gap. It was agreed that officers should continue to implement the process to develop a revenue financial plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28.

## D.2 WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Consultation

On 24 June 2022, the Council Executive approved a three stage West Lothian (WL) 2028 Your Council, Your Say public consultation approach. Phase 1 of the consultation commenced on 24 June 2022 and closed on 31 July 2022 and Phase 2 commenced on 7 October 2022 and closed on 20 November 2022.

The council received 2,560 responses to Phase 2 from a wide range of stakeholders, with the majority of responses being received via the online survey. From those responses over 22,000 individual comments were received. A summary of the results from Phase 1 was presented to Council Executive 4 October 2022, with an overall summary from Phase 2 considered by Council Executive on 20 December 2022.

Of the 22,864 comments received, 1,336 comments (5.84% of all comments) across one measure, including council tax questions, have been allocated to service areas which report to this PDSP. The allocation of the comments and measures is set out below in table 1.

*Table 1: Phase 2 Consultation Comments Relevant to PDSP Remit*

<b>Phase 2 Ref</b>	<b>Phase 2 Proposal</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>	<b>% of Comments</b>
1A	Service redesign, integration & modernisation	1,336	5.84%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,336</b>	<b>5.84%</b>

A summarised version of the comments received in relation to the saving options being considered by this Panel is provided in Appendix 1 for consideration.

Officers have reviewed all of the individual comments, considering the merits of the measure and suggested a response from the following options:

1. The respondent advised that they agree with the proposal.
2. The respondent advised that they either did not agree or did not believe the council should consider the proposal.
3. The respondent advised that they had no comment to make, or posed a question of the measure.
4. The council is already doing this.
- 5a. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because the council is required by law to deliver this work.
- 5b. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is likely that the costs of this proposal would outweigh the benefit, or requires additional expenditure.
- 5c. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is not consistent with the council's values and priorities.
- 5d. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it has been previously considered and will not be progressed.
6. The respondent suggested an improvement. Officers will consider how this could be developed.
7. The respondent's comment was either not relevant to the question, inappropriate and/or contained personal and sensitive information.
8. This suggestion is out with the responsibility of West Lothian Council. Where relevant, we will forward these comments to our partner organisations.
9. The respondent made a comment on the survey question.

A summary of the categorised responses is set out below in table 2.

*Table 2: Phase 2 Comment Categorisation*

<b>Comment Category</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>	<b>% of Total Comments</b>
1. The respondent advised that they agree with the proposal.	551	2.41%
2. The respondent advised that they either did not agree or did not believe the council should consider the proposal.	318	1.39%
3. The respondent advised that they had no comment to make, or posed a question of the measure.	168	0.73%
4. The council is already doing this.	81	0.35%
5a. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because the council is required by law to deliver this work.	5	0.02%
5b. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is likely that the costs of this proposal would outweigh the benefit, or requires additional expenditure.	3	0.01%
5c. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is not consistent with the council's values and priorities.	3	0.01%
5d. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it has been previously considered and will not be progressed.	-	0.00%
6. The respondent suggested an improvement. Officers will consider how this could be developed.	87	0.38%
7. The respondent's comment was either not relevant to the question, inappropriate and/or contained personal and sensitive information.	19	0.08%
8. This suggestion is out with the responsibility of West Lothian Council. Where relevant, we will forward these comments to our partner organisations.	7	0.03%
9. The respondent made a comment on the survey question.	94	0.41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,336</b>	<b>5.84%</b>

An analysis of all of the comments allocated to the Public and Community Safety PDSP is set out in Appendix 2. The Phase 2 consultation document is provided in Appendix 3 for reference. Full details of the officer response to each comment is available to view online on the council's website at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/wl2028](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/wl2028).

### **D.3 Updated Revenue Budget Position 2023/24 to 2027/28**

Following the report to Council Executive on 6 December 2022, which highlighted the adverse movements in the projected budget position since the commencement of phase 2 of the public consultation and agreed actions required to ensure the continued financial sustainability of the council, the council has received the local government finance settlement (LGFS) for 2023/24. A report on the outcome of the LGFS and the council's updated financial planning position for the five years 2023/24 to 2027/28 was reported to Council Executive on 26 January 2023.

The table below summarises the main elements of the budget model for each of the five years, with the revised budget gap for 2023/24 to 2027/28 estimated to be £47.6 million. The assumptions for council tax are currently under review by officers, with a report on scenarios presented to Corporate Policy and Resources PDSP on 26 January 2023.

Table 3: Budget Model Summary 2023/24 to 2027/28

<b>Incremental Movements</b>	<b>23/24 £'m</b>	<b>24/25 £'m</b>	<b>25/26 £'m</b>	<b>Three Year Total £'m</b>	<b>26/27 £'m</b>	<b>27/28 £'m</b>	<b>Five Year Total £'m</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>							
Staffing Costs	14.5	6.3	6.6	<b>27.4</b>	6.7	6.8	<b>40.9</b>
Demographics & Demand Pressures	3.7	3.3	2.9	<b>9.9</b>	3.1	3.4	<b>16.4</b>
Revenue Consequences of Capital	2.3	1.0	0.9	<b>4.2</b>	1.3	0.5	<b>6.0</b>
SG Funded Developments	1.9	0.0	0.0	<b>1.9</b>	0.0	0.0	<b>1.9</b>
Service Pressures & Developments	5.4	0.1	0.2	<b>5.7</b>	0.2	0.4	<b>6.3</b>
Inflation & Indexation	15.0	8.5	5.1	<b>28.6</b>	5.3	5.7	<b>39.6</b>
<b>Gross Expenditure Increases</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>77.7</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>111.1</b>
<b>Income</b>							
Council Tax (4.5% assumption)	(5.4)	(5.5)	(5.8)	(16.7)	(6.1)	(6.4)	(29.2)
Fees & Charges (4.5% assumption)	(0.4)	(0.5)	(0.5)	(1.4)	(0.5)	(0.6)	(2.5)
Ringfenced SG Grant Funding	(9.4)	(2.5)	(2.5)	(14.4)	(2.5)	(2.5)	(19.4)
Core SG Grant Funding	(9.4)	0.0	0.0	(9.4)	(3.0)	0.0	(12.4)
<b>Income Movements</b>	<b>(24.6)</b>	<b>(8.5)</b>	<b>(8.8)</b>	<b>(41.9)</b>	<b>(12.1)</b>	<b>(9.5)</b>	<b>(63.5)</b>
<b>Forecast Budget Gap</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>47.6</b>

The forecast budget gap reflects the outcome of the 2023/24 local government finance settlement and latest budget model assumptions. Officers continually keep the assumptions in the budget model under review to ensure, as far as possible, they reflect current circumstances and information. The nature of long term forecasting means it is challenging to identify expenditure pressures and income for future years. There are always risks and uncertainties associated with long term financial planning and assumptions. The ongoing cost of living crisis and the remaining effects of the pandemic and the UK leaving the EU continue to provide considerable uncertainty. In addition, the outcome of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill commencing its journey through the Scottish Parliament and resulting changes to service delivery models will have an impact on local government services, funding and financial and planning assumptions. There are significant risks and uncertainties associated with the long term financial assumptions underlying the budget model, including:

- Although the Scottish Government has intimated flat cash funding for local government, with a minor increase in 2026/27, the outlook for public sector funding remains uncertain.
- Continuation of high inflation resulting in substantial real terms reduction in the value of council funding.
- Policy changes by the UK or Scottish governments which restrict the council's flexibility to decide how to deliver services locally.
- Funding not being provided to fully cover the costs of introducing new legislation and commitments.
- Ring fencing of grant funding, or service delivery commitments, constraining the ability of local authorities to allocate resources to deliver local priorities.
- Economic uncertainty, where economic growth is not in line with the Office for Budget Responsibility and Scottish Fiscal Commission forecasts.
- Reform of local governance being pursued, providing uncertainty for service provision and funding.
- House building assumptions of 900 houses per year not being realised resulting in changes to council tax and school demographic assumptions.
- The level of future pay awards, which could be in excess of the council's planning assumptions.
- Increase in costs associated with demand led services.

- Actual pupil numbers not reflecting the school pupil forecasts.

#### D.4 Approach to Financial Planning

Audit Scotland and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) have both identified the need for public bodies to focus on their medium to long term financial sustainability. They have advised that public bodies should develop strategies that are based on defined priorities, providing a clear road map for service delivery within constrained budgets.

The Accounts Commission has emphasised in several local government overview reports that evidence shows that councils are finding financial pressures increasingly difficult to manage and that effective leadership and robust planning are essential to help meet the challenges ahead. In addition, the Accounts Commission believe that all councils should have a long term financial strategy covering a minimum of five years and that these long term strategies should be supported by detailed plans covering a minimum of three years. The current financial headwinds facing local government, means that councils are required to take urgent and sustainable actions to ensure ongoing financial sustainability.

As agreed by Council Executive in October 2021 officers have continued the current approach to financial planning. The main elements of the financial planning process are:

- **Activity prioritisation** – priority analysis of services against council priorities and enabler themes to inform decisions about whether the service should continue or if changes should be made to service delivery. Scores provide a starting point from which to review proposed future service delivery.
- **Modernisation & efficiency savings** – whilst considering prioritisation savings, officers will also think about how activities can continue to be delivered within available resources. This will include identifying more efficient ways of delivery. This means that services need to focus on delivering statutory services at minimum cost and potentially removing or substantially reducing non statutory services.
- **Corporate projects** – identification and development of corporate saving options covering areas such as income generation, digital transformation, shared services and climate change.

To ensure the council is operating on a sustainable financial footing, fundamental changes will be required to some services, subject to the results from the consultation exercise. This is consistent with the findings of the Accounts Commission which believes that all options for change need to be investigated, with councils rigorously challenging existing service models and identifying alternative approaches to service delivery. The council's approach to financial and corporate planning:

- Provides a medium term view which is essential when implementing effective service and workforce planning, allowing workforce changes to be made in a proactive way.
- Provides as much certainty as possible for council employees and trade unions on the plans and actions to deliver budget savings and service changes.
- Provides officers with sufficient time to implement what, in many cases, will be fundamental changes to service delivery which require a significant lead in time, and may be dependent on or linked to other saving options.
- Helps officers and elected members to consider the long term implications of policy decisions and changes to service delivery.
- Creates greater certainty surrounding detailed financial plans, especially for the first three years of the five year financial strategy.
- Provides services and customers with advance notice of changes.
- Helps to integrate services and planning with community planning partners, especially where outcomes are longer term (e.g. health and social care, preventative spend).

## D.5 Budget Saving Options Relevant to Public and Community Safety PDSP

Building on the process outlined above, officers have developed budget saving options. Information is provided in Appendix 4 on officer proposed budget reduction options for the three years 2023/24 to 2025/26 providing a comprehensive list of savings at a service level. Where a saving measure is agreed and implemented in the first three years of the new five year strategy but there is continued associated savings in years four and five, this is noted in the appendix.

A description of the saving options, the value (including any full year effect for years 4 and 5) and anticipated full time equivalent (FTE) reduction is provided, in addition to whether it is a prioritisation or efficiency saving. Any staffing reductions will be achieved through the council's organisational change procedure. Information on further consultation, reporting or delegation to officers and potential impact on service performance and quality is also provided consistent with the annual budget report. Links to the consultation help demonstrate how options have been developed following the consultation.

The council's budget model, as summarised in section D.3 of this report, provides indexation for budgets on the basis of the anticipated net budget after application of saving options. Should West Lothian Council not agree to implement the budget saving options identified by officers, the budget gap will further increase as the council will have to provide additional budget to cover increased indexation.

In summary, the budget saving options relevant to the Public and Community Safety PDSP for the three years 2023/24 to 2025/26 are as follows:

### Housing, Customer & Building Services

Phase 2 Ref	Phase 2 Proposal	Ref	Measure	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total 3 Years £'000
1A	Service redesign, integration & modernisation	H2a	Safer Neighbourhood Team workforce management & savings in supplies & services	32	23	0	55
<b>Total</b>				<b>32</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>55</b>

Equality relevance assessments (ERAs) have been completed for all saving options in line with the council's established approach to equality. Where it has been assessed that a measure is relevant to equality, human rights and/or socioeconomic disadvantage, a full integrated impact assessment (IIA) has been completed. All ERAs and IIAs for options being considered by this PDSP are included in Appendix 5. Equality assessments enable the council to identify impacts and to consider and develop mitigation measures. They are intended to inform the decision making process by making all relevant information available to members. They are not intended to prevent decisions being taken and implemented.

At this stage the estimated budget gap over the five years 2023/24 to 2027/28 is £47.6 million and there are total officer savings options across all PDSPs of £47.5 million, leaving a small outstanding budget gap. As agreed by Council Executive on 6 December 2022, officers will develop additional savings to address any remaining gaps. Ensuring the council has a sustainable financial plan over the medium and longer term will be an ongoing process, with the council using one-off resources in the first years of the new five year programme to provide time to identify and implement recurring budget saving options. This is a departure from the council's previous approach to financial planning but is a necessity due to the financial crisis facing local government. Following approval of the new five year revenue financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 officers will identify further

savings options in early 2023 for incorporation into Phase 3 of the public consultation, which will cover further savings options for 2024/25 to 2027/28.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

This report provides the Public and Community Safety PDSP with information on potential saving options in council services included within the remit of the PDSP to enable further scrutiny and consideration before the new five year revenue financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 is presented to Council for approval.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

Review of Elected Member Involvement in Financial Planning – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 12 June 2018

Future Budget Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 – Financial Context and Proposed Approach – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 26 October 2021

Revenue Budget 2022/23 – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to West Lothian Council on 15 February 2022

Scottish Spending Review 2022 and Future Budget Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 Update – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 21 June 2022

Public Consultation Approach 2022 – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Council Executive on 21 June 2022

WL2028 Your Council Your Say – Public Consultation – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Council Executive on 4 October 2022

Autumn Statement and Scottish Budget Announcements 2022 – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 6 December 2022

WL2028 Your Council Your Say – Public Consultation – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Council Executive on 20 December 2022

Scottish Budget and Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 17 January 2023

### Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Summary of WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Consultation Responses for Public and Community Safety PDSP

Appendix 2 – Phase 2 Consultation Response – Comment Categorisation on measures within the remit of the Panel

Appendix 3 – WL2028 Your Council, Your Say – Phase 2 Consultation Document

Appendix 4 – Potential Budget Saving Options for services within the remit of the Panel

Appendix 5 – Equality Relevance Assessments (ERAs) and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)

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**Julie Whitelaw**  
**Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services**  
**31 January 2023**



**Summary of WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Consultation Responses for Public and Community Safety PDSP**

<b>Phase 2 Ref</b>	<b>Phase 2 Proposal</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Comments</b>	<b>Summary of Comments</b>
1A	Service Redesign, Integration & Modernisation	1,336	5.84%	<p>Support for the modernisation of council functions/services and taking advantage of technology and systems to achieve efficiencies.</p> <p>Support for the consolidation of council services and a review of the structure.</p> <p>Concern about the impact upon staff of reductions on frontline council employees and that it might result in poorer quality services for customers and declining performance.</p> <p>Suggestions that the hybrid working pilot should offer opportunities for the council to reduce the property portfolio and associated costs and that it would also support increased levels of staff productivity/efficiency.</p>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,336</b>	<b>5.84%</b>	

**Appendix 2****Phase 2 Consultation Response – Comment Summary on measures within the remit of the Panel**

<b>Phase 2 Proposal</b>	<b>1. The respondent advised that they agree with the proposal</b>	<b>2. The respondent advised that they either did not agree or did not believe the council should consider the proposal</b>	<b>3. The respondent advised that they had no comment to make, or posed a question of the measure</b>	<b>4. The council is already doing this</b>	<b>5a. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because the council is required by law to deliver this work</b>	<b>5b. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is likely that the costs of this proposal would outweigh the benefit, or requires additional expenditure</b>	<b>5c. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is not consistent with the council's values and priorities</b>	<b>5d. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it has been previously considered and will not be progressed</b>	<b>6. The respondent suggested an improvement. Officers will consider how this could be developed</b>	<b>7. The respondent's comment was either not relevant to the question, inappropriate and/or contained personal and sensitive information</b>	<b>8. This suggestion is out with the responsibility of West Lothian Council. Where relevant, we will forward these comments to our partner organisation</b>	<b>9. The respondent made a comment on the survey question</b>	<b>Total</b>
1A Service redesign, integration & modernisation	551	318	168	81	5	3	3	-	87	19	7	94	1,336
<b>Total</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>1,336</b>

**Appendix 3**

**WL2028 Your Council, Your Say – Phase 2 Consultation Document**

# Your Council Your Say 2028

## A message from the Chief Executive

**The council is committed to meeting the needs of local people and high performance across all areas of service delivery.**

Like other local authorities in Scotland, West Lothian Council faces constrained funding and substantial cost increases in the next five years.

This means that the council, along with the West Lothian community, will have to make difficult decisions about local services. Reductions in local government public spending have impacted council services for over 15 years and the council has made over £150 million worth of savings since 2007/08.

We also understand that local people and businesses are also experiencing difficulties from the Cost of Living increases and the next five years are also expected to be extremely challenging for the council as it will also face many of the same pressures from the Costing of Living crisis.

In preparation for the challenges ahead, we want to work with you – our community and partners – in shaping the future of council services in West Lothian. This consultation is the second in a series of planned engagements.

**Your feedback** will be used to help us become more sustainable, address the funding gap and meet the challenges ahead.

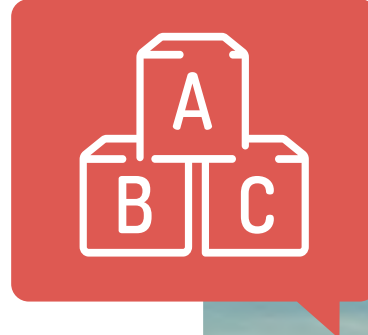
Phase 1 of the Council's consultation approach commenced in June 2022.

Following further developments in the Cost of Living crisis and related cost pressures on energy costs the budget gap has increased to £47.1million over the five-year period 2023/24 to 2027/28, with a budget gap of £36.5million over the three-year period 2023/24 to 2025/26.

The consultation on the officer savings proposals will only take around 5-10 minutes to complete but it is vital that you take the time to tell us what your views are on the officer budget proposals contained within this document; and what your views are on Council tax, which is used to help fund local services.

Your views are important and I would encourage every person who lives and/or works in West Lothian, local organisations and business to get involved

**Graham Hope,**  
Chief Executive



## Consultation Roadmap to 2028

The council is undertaking a three-stage consultation with the people, business and customers of West Lothian in order to form the Council's Priorities and Budget Strategy for 2023/24 to 2027/28, and also consult on the future direction of the Council.

### PHASE 1 | CONSULTATION - COMPLETE

### PHASE 2 | CONSULTATION

Autumn 2022 Budget savings 2023/24 to 2025/26

### BUDGET SETTING

5-year financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

3-year detailed revenue budget 2023/24 to 2025/26

Agreement on taxation levels for 2023/24 to 2027/28

### PHASE 3 | CONSULTATION

Summer 2023 - Budget savings 2026/27 to 2027/28

## Phase 2 | Our Budget

Local voices matter and, in the second phase of our consultation, we want you to help us:

1

Consider the officer proposals that are set out in the consultation to address the funding gap of £47.1 million



2

Provide feedback on the proposals



3

Suggest any other ways that we may help to reduce council expenditure and/or changes to council services to make them more efficient



4

Have your say on Council Tax in West Lothian



**How to take part in the survey:**



**Online**  
Respondents are encouraged to complete the form online by going to [www.westlothian.gov.uk/WL2028](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/WL2028) or by scanning the QR code with your mobile device.

### Paper copy

You can complete this form, Please read the proposals from pages 10 to 12 and share your views on pages 13 and 14. Post your completed form to:

**West Lothian Council**  
Freepost BULLETIN SURVEY  
Livingston  
EH54 6FF

### Hand survey in

Alternatively hand your completed survey into any partnership centre or Customer Information services (CIS) office.

It is expected that West Lothian Council will have to make significant savings over the next five years due to insufficient funding and rising costs.

This means that the council, along with the West Lothian community, will have to make difficult decisions about local services.

We are consulting on officer proposals, from the senior leadership team, to save £36.5 million over the next three years – from 2023/24 to 2025/26. The council must balance its budget – something we are legally required to do. Because we have insufficient budget, we are forced to reduce expenditure on local services. We want to ensure that the funding we do have is spent on services that matter most to our communities.



## What you need to know

### Background

Reductions in local government public spending have impacted council services for over 15 years and the council has made over £150 million worth of savings since 2007

Like other councils in Scotland, West Lothian Council faces further constrained funding and substantial costs over the next five years

The Scottish Government has advised that councils face a cash freeze in funding for 2023/24 to 2025/26. These funding constraints are combined with rising costs

which include growing number of pupils, an increasing number of older people with care needs, higher energy costs and meeting pay awards.

This means that the council, along with the West Lothian community, will have to make difficult decisions about local services.

It's clear that the council need to make changes to the way services are delivered in future

### Are we consulting on proposed changes?

Yes, the council is consulting on the future direction of council services

At this stage, council officers have published a number of budget proposals which represent reductions and changes in services. Decisions on what will change will not be made by elected members (councillors) until after the consultation is complete

### What might the future look like for local services?

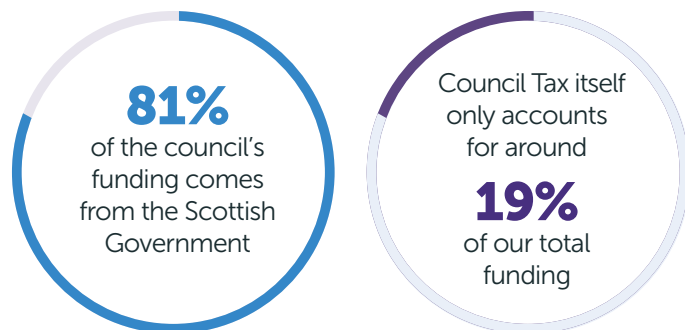
The council has a legal duty to provide certain services and this will continue. The council will also continue to prioritise our resources and ensure we have the right people, partners and assets to deliver positive

outcomes for West Lothian

In future, the council will not deliver all of the services it currently provides – we simply do not have the resources to do so. Some services currently delivered will have to be delivered by partners, communities and other organisations

If all of these officer proposals (pages 10 to 12) are agreed, the council will be able to balance its budget – something we are legally required to do. If some of these proposals are not agreed, other ways to deliver a balance budget via additional savings proposals will have to be identified.

## How is the council funded?



In 2022/23 our revenue budget (day to day running costs) amounts to:

**£490 million**

## How do we spend that budget?

**£10.5 million** on public transport (including school transport) and bus subsidies for privately owned bus providers

**£15.8 million** on facilities management, including school meals, cleaning council buildings, janitorial staff and street crossing patrol guides



**£5.8 million** on the council's fleet of vehicles



**£29.2 million** is spent on social work services for children and families

**£36.6 million** on services for vulnerable adults



**£26.7 million** on Early Learning and Childcare



**£9.3 million** on footpaths, street lighting, roads, winter maintenance, structures and flood prevention



**£53.8 million** on services for older people

**£3.6 million** on culture and sports services



**£4.2 million** on homelessness services and community safety



**£19.5 million** on support for children with additional needs



**£70.5 million** on Primary School education

**£60.5 million** on Secondary School education



**£4 million** on planning, regeneration, economic development, trading standards and environmental health

**£2.9 million** on neighbourhood services, including libraries, registration services, community centres, and customer information services



**£14.9 million** on the council's property portfolio



**£6.4 million** on country parks/ open spaces, play areas, street cleaning and cemeteries



**£13.3 million** on waste management & recycling services



# Phase 1 | Consultation | Our Future

## Local Voices matter and the first stage – Phase 1, aimed to:

- 1 Understand the services that local people want and need in the future
- 2 Identify priorities that will help West Lothian be a better place to live, work, learn and visit
- 3 Identify some principles for change that help us to transform the way that the Council works
- 4 Understand how you think we should address the funding gap.
- 5 Understand how you want the council to engage with communities and customers

## A summary of the outcome from the Phase 1 consultation is set out below:

### Your Community

#### ? We asked

What are the best parts of living in West Lothian?

#### ≡ You said

- Access to open spaces, parks and green spaces
- Access to shops and services
- The Transport links

What parts of your community need to be improved?

- Better community facilities
- Availability and reliability of public transport
- Access to open spaces

What are the most important issues for your community?

- Access to health care
- Economy and the cost of living
- Crime and community safety

What are the most important issues for you?

- Access to health care
- My mental health and wellbeing
- My physical health

#### What we will do

- The council will continue to protect and maintain the local environment through a range of council services.
- The council will continue to support the local economy through support for business and employability programmes.
- The council will develop a re-prioritised and demand led Public Transport Strategy (see proposal 4b).
- The council will offer communities the opportunity to access community facilities in partnership with other organisations.
- The council will pass comments about access to health services to our partners NHS Lothian and will continue to work with them to increase the quality and responsiveness of local health services.
- The council will pass comments about crime to our partners in Police Scotland and will continue to work with them to improve community safety in West Lothian

### Engaging with the Council

#### ? We asked

What is your preferred way of engaging with the council on the future of council services

#### ≡ You said

- By far the most popular option was through online surveys
- Some support for social media
- Only limited support for in-person public meetings, focus groups and road shows
- Only limited support for paper surveys

#### What we will do

- The council will continue to engage with people who live and/or work in West Lothian, local organisations and business through a range of methods, forums, and channels.

### Council Commitments and Priorities

#### ? We asked

Connect, Empower and Deliver as commitments for the Council?

#### ≡ You said

- These are good commitments
- The council must put them into action
- The council must demonstrate achievement

#### What we will do

- The council will put these commitments into action, including; re-developing the council values, appraisal process and performance management system to ensure they are embedded in the delivery of our services and actions of all of our staff.
- Opportunities to connect and empower the community and our staff will also be advanced, such as under proposals 1a, 1c, and 3a.

#### ? We asked

Are the Eight Priorities for West Lothian still the right ones?

#### ≡ You said

- Yes, they still matter
- Consider adding Housing & Homelessness
- The council must demonstrate achievement in the priorities

#### What we will do

- The council will realign our priorities using feedback from the community. This will be used as the basis for our Corporate Plan for the period 2023 to 2028 and will guide our decision making and resource prioritisation in the years ahead.
- The council will ensure that measurable progress and achievement in each of the priorities is reported to the community on a regular scheduled basis.

### Reducing Council Costs

#### ? We asked

To reduce costs, the council should?

#### ≡ You said

- Sell some Council properties and assets
- Close some buildings that have low usage
- Empower local groups and communities to deliver some services

#### What we will do

- The council will continue to modernise and rationalise all properties across the estate.
- As the number of buildings required to deliver council services reduces, community groups will have the opportunity to request ownership of properties through the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, see proposal 3a.

#### ? We asked

The approach to Digital Council service provision should be?

#### ≡ You said

- Continue to invest in the council website
- Increase the number of services that are accessible online via the council website
- Continue to provide telephone and face-to-face access to services for those who do not or cannot access digital services

#### What we will do

- The council will pursue opportunities to digitalise processes where there is a clear benefit to customers/efficiency, see proposals 1a and 1c.
- The council is committed to the partnership model that increases access and connectivity of council services for the public. We will also continue to provide a comprehensive customer service that is demand-responsive and preserves face-to-face and telephone contact as well as digital contacts.

# 1 Modernising the council

Measures totalling £21.3 million over the next three years have been identified, which would make the council more agile and cost effective. There are opportunities – due to new technologies, planned service changes and new ways of working – to increase the efficiency of council operations. This will mean changes and/or reductions to some of the services that we deliver and the council will also make changes to structures, resourcing and management arrangements in some services in order to achieve efficiencies.



## 1A Service Redesign, Integration and Modernisation

**Estimated saving: £1.2 million**

The internal business and financial support functions that are provided to council services to support statutory (legal) requirements would change through redesign, integration and greater use of technology to increase efficiency and effectiveness. This would include consolidating services, reducing staff numbers and the number of systems we use within the internal business and financial support functions that are provided to council services. There will be an impact on customers but we will seek to minimise the impact through redesigning services, integration of teams and further use of technology. The council will also review a small number of externally contracted services, with a view to achieving cost reductions.

## 1B Review of Management arrangements / Management efficiencies

**Estimated saving: £500,000**

Some management arrangements will be reviewed in conjunction with changes to services and resource re-alignment, where it is appropriate. The council will ensure that the management structure continues to support effective delivery of council services and statutory duties, whilst also seeking to make council governance and decision-making more efficient.

## 1C Digital Transformation

**Estimated saving: £502,000**

The council must continue to match provision with the way that customers access services, which increasingly requires investment in digital solutions to meet demand. The council will adopt technologies that will deliver automated processes and a reduction in staff costs and will also deliver multi-media customer services that will increase customer choice and accessibility. This would allow the council to continue to provide support whilst delivering a more efficient service at low cost.

## 1D Allocation of School Resources

**Estimated saving: £5 million**

It is proposed that the model for determining devolved school resources is revised further to identify opportunities for more efficient service delivery. This may include utilising resources provided to deliver additional support in schools for core staffing requirements, greater use of technology to deliver the curriculum, and changes to administrative and pupil support staffing arrangements.

The council proposes that changes made in the allocation of resources to schools, through a revised Devolved School Management funding model and through a review of provision by third party providers, will enable the council to continue service provision.

## 1E Realignment of free provision in schools to match Scottish Government commitments and funding, and maintain school clothing grants at current levels

**Estimated saving: £890,000**

The council would propose to align free school meal, breakfast club and instrumental music provision with Scottish Government funding levels. The council would continue to deliver these vital services for our children and young people. The council would also maintain school clothing grants, which are above the amounts paid by many councils, at existing levels.

## 1F Restructuring the School Day

**Estimated saving: £2.4 million**

West Lothian has developed an agile learning culture and approach and delivered improved school attainment results and improved learning experiences for pupils. Teacher contact time is currently 22.5 hours per week and there is an opportunity to re-align the primary school day to match this time. This could provide continuity for children and offer the opportunity to provide alternative learning experiences for the remainder of the time. This would result in teacher/pupil contact time being reduced but with no change to the length of the overall school day. This proposal would also lead to a review of the secondary school week by reducing the school week by 50mins, but again with no change to the start time and end time of the school day, and would bring the secondary school week in line with other local authorities.

## 1G Care for Children

**Estimated saving: £1.2 million**

The proposal includes a review of all children's services to achieve further efficiency by redesigning and aligning teams more closely to deliver more streamlined teams and reduced staffing. The service will maintain its focus on supporting children most at risk and providing earlier intervention services in line with statutory (legal) requirements.

There will also be a strengthening of the range of fostering options available locally to support children stay in West Lothian. This will support good outcomes and prevent children having to leave their home community of West Lothian to be cared for.

This proposal includes developing intensive foster care to support the most traumatised children, investing in

increasing the existing group of fostering families and also increasing the numbers of foster carers able to care for children with a disability.

## 1H Commissioned Services

**Estimated saving: £533,000**

This proposal includes a review of all commissioning arrangements with third parties in place for children's services ensuring that they are aligned with the services current priorities and taking account of all new developments and approaches in place. This review will lead to cost reductions and the delivery of commissioned services targeted at the highest areas of priority.

## 1I Revised facilities management in schools

**Estimated saving: £1.1 million**

It is proposed that the facilities management service will be reviewed to seek better scheduling of activities and revised cover arrangements and opening hours in schools.

## 1J Technical Financial Savings

**Estimated saving: £1 million**

The council has strong financial planning and management arrangements in place and the effectiveness of those arrangements are recognised by our Audit and Regulators. The council intends to make efficiencies in the administration of our financial processes, with resources re-aligned to match the demand for support for customers and changes to processes such as, Universal Credit.

## 1K Review funding models in partnership with West Lothian Leisure

**Estimated saving: £750,000**

Reflecting the council's reduced income, the funding provided to West Lothian Leisure will be removed and it will become fully self-funded. The council would continue to engage and support West Lothian Leisure in reviewing its business model and service delivery for communities.

## 1L General balance of savings to be identified

**Estimated saving: £6.2 million**

Officer proposals amount to savings of £30.3 million for the three year period 2023/24 to 2025/26 against a budget gap of £36.5 million over this period, resulting in a general balance of savings of £6.2 million that has still to be identified. Given that the majority of the council's budget is staffing costs, it is highly likely that the balance will be met by changes to service delivery and staffing levels across the council's workforce.



## 2 Modernising Social Care

The **West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB)** has responsibility for planning for most of the health and social care services for adults in West Lothian.

The IJB role is to set the strategic direction for functions delegated to it and deliver the priorities set out in its **Strategic Plan** ([insert link](#)). The functions of the IJB include: Primary Care, Adult Social Care, Mental Health Services, Learning Disability Services, Physical Disability Services, Community Health Services, Community Pharmacy Services, Health Improvement, Unscheduled Care for Adults, Housing Support/Aids and Adaptations.

The IJB receives funding allocations from West

Lothian Council and NHS Lothian to enable delivery of local priorities for health and social care for adults. The Board gives directions to the council and health board as to how they must carry out their business to secure delivery of the Strategic Plan.

Over the three-year period, from 2023/24 to 2025/26, it is expected the IJB will have to make substantial savings as funding available will be insufficient to meet the increasing cost of service

delivery. The ongoing financial pressures and the increasing levels of demand mean that the IJB will need to change the way it delivers services. A range of officer proposals totalling £5.45 million over the next three years have been identified for relevant social care services and the IJB will consult with people in West Lothian to seek their views on these proposals and associated changes to service delivery. The IJB's consultation can be accessed **INSERT LINK**.

## 3 Community Empowerment and Partnership

Through community empowerment the council is seeking to support people to working together with others in their community to increase control over their lives and the services they use. Measures totalling £3.8 million over the next three years have been identified which would enable the council to deliver more effective, flexible and affordable services.

### 3A Empowering communities and reducing the number of council facilities

**Estimated saving: £1.1 million**

Over the years the council has significantly reduced the number and cost of buildings and the council will continue to modernise and rationalise all properties across the estate.

As the number of buildings required to deliver council services reduces, community groups have the opportunity to request ownership of community centres and other council properties through the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. As the council has moved to the partnership model, there is an opportunity to consolidate the number of

community centres and village halls. It is therefore proposed to rationalise the provision of council facilities and community centres across West Lothian and support community access through council or partner facilities within each community.

### 3B Redesign of Early Learning and Childcare

**Estimated saving: £2.3 million**

The council will make sure that all resources available for early learning and childcare are fully utilised to support high quality service delivery. The council will realign provision and staffing in nurseries to match parental choice for nursery placements, and deliver an option for parents/carers to purchase additional hours of early learning and childcare in council settings.

### 3C Service Re-structure of Youth Services

**Estimated saving: £500,000**

A review of youth services has shown that the service makes its greatest impact through More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) – a programme that aims to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

The focus will be on MCMC, with other initiatives and work supported through closer working between schools and community learning partners.

Scan to Complete the survey online





## 4 Environment, Climate Change and reducing energy use

Measures totalling £4.8 million over the next three years have been identified that would change the services we provide to improve the local environment and infrastructure, and ensure that the council continues to have efficient and effectively managed assets to support service delivery. This will include new standards and delivery models that will ensure we continue to protect the built and natural environment in West Lothian more effectively.

### 4A Revised Service Standards and Delivery Models – Waste Services Estimated saving: £336,000

There is a requirement to review service provision at the Community Recycling Centres to make sure that the service is delivered in an effective and efficient way whilst meeting council priorities.

### 4B Reprioritised Passenger Transport Strategy Estimated saving: £2.2 million

The council currently subsidises around 20% of bus routes as well as providing a number of other services, such as school transport and concessionary transport schemes.

Many of the subsidised services are underutilised, and a public transport review is proposed to focus on connecting communities and businesses in a way that is affordable and effective. This will include ceasing some services and exploring alternative transport models. An updated transport strategy would focus on use of concessionary bus, Handicabs and Dial-a-Ride schemes, and removal of all subsidies for bus routes that are not commercially viable. The council would also propose to remove concessionary rail schemes with are in additional to existing national schemes.

### 4C Reprioritised School Transport Strategy Estimated saving: £1.4 million

The council currently provides school transport to pupils who live less than the statutory (legal) distance of 2 miles for Primary School pupils and 3 miles for Secondary School pupils. An updated school transport strategy would apply the statutory (legal) minimum limits for school transport and the use of the Young Persons national entitlement scheme for free travel on commercial bus routes.

### 4C Revised Country Parks Service Estimated saving: £95,000

It is proposed that animal attraction at Beecraigs Country Park is closed, with the animals being relocated to alternative animal attraction venue(s) out with council operations. This attraction currently operates at a net loss and closure is expected to have minimal impact on future visitor numbers.

### 4D Revised Service Standards and Delivery Models – Roads and Transport Estimated saving: £246,000

There is a requirement to review service provision and standards to make sure that the service is delivered in an effective and efficient way whilst meeting council priorities. Service delivery, including winter

maintenance, will be changed to focus on statutory (legal) requirements with an updated approach to asset management. This will mean some services, such as festive lighting, will no longer be provided by the council.

### 4E Efficiencies from improved use and management of council properties Estimated saving: £279,000

The council has a ten-year programme for investing in its assets to support service delivery. This approach reduces the need for reactive maintenance work, improving how the council invests in property assets.

### 4F Reducing carbon emissions and improving efficiency Estimated saving: £245,000

Following the success of previous energy efficiency initiatives, the council will continue to reduce energy consumption and related costs through new energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. processes, with resources re-aligned to match the demand for support for customers and changes to processes such as, Universal Credit.

## 5 Reviewing income, concessions and other contributions

The council has one of the lowest levels of income through sales, fees and charges per head of population in Scotland. The council established an approach to income and concessions in 2015 where all discretionary charges are benchmarked with Scottish averages or other local providers. Measures totalling £1.1 million over the next three years have been identified, which would raise additional income.

It is proposed that all opportunities for discretionary charging will be reviewed and benchmarked in addition to a standard indexation increase being applied in line with existing practice.

### Areas where the council could investigate opportunities for additional sources of income include:

- Introduction of charges for household garden waste collections
- Review of fees for planning advisory services and to maximise developer contributions
- Lease facilities to a commercial operator, social enterprise or franchise
- Review of rents and fees for the council's commercial properties



Scan to Complete  
the survey online

Following analysis of the feedback received, the results of the Phase 2 consultation will be reported to a meeting of the Council Executive Committee on 20 December 2022, and thereafter a series of special Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels will take place in January 2023. This will provide a platform for elected members and community organisation representatives to discuss the findings of the consultation and put questions to council officers relating to the consultation.

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this consultation document.**



**Alternatively hand your completed survey into any partnership centre or Customer Information services (CIS) office.**

**Provide your comments here (please include the budget measure reference, for example: 1a)**

☐ Prefer not to say

**Potential Budget Saving Options for service within the remit of the Panel****Consultation Questions Key:**

Ref	Consultation Question
1A	Service Redesign, Integration and Modernisation

**Housing, Customer & Building Services – Service Redesign, Integration & Modernisation**

Saving Ref	Consultation Ref	Measure	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000	Years 4 & 5 £'000	Estimated Staffing Reduction (FTE)	Prioritisation/ Efficiency	Full IIA?	Further Consultation/ Reporting or Delegation to Officers <sup>1</sup>	Impact on Service Performance and Quality
H2a	1A	Safer Neighbourhood Team workforce management & savings in supplies & services	32	23	0	55	0	1.0	Efficiency	No	Officers to deliver as operational measure including consultation with community planning partners, staff and trade unions.	The work of the team will be prioritised to minimise any potential reduction in performance.
<b>Total</b>			<b>32</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.0</b>				

<sup>1</sup> Further Consultation/Reporting or Delegation is subject to the measure being approved by Council at the budget setting meeting.

**Equality Relevance Assessments (ERAs) and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)****Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	H2a - Safer Neighbourhood Team workforce management and savings in supplies and services
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Housing Customer & Building Services
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Housing Operations & Community Safety Manager
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	None
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	11/07/2022

2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	

<p><b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
<b>Age</b> – older people, young people and children	
<b>Disability</b> – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	
<b>Gender reassignment</b> – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	
<b>Race</b> – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
<b>Religion or belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
<b>Sex</b> – Male, female and intersex	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	



#### 4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

Socio-economic Disadvantage	Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	

#### 5. Integrated impact assessment required?

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

YES		NO	X
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#### 6. Decision rationale

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

The council has a statutory duty to provide advice and enforcement activity relating to antisocial behaviour (ASB) as prescribed by various pieces of legislation, the primary legislation being Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004. This provides the powers to resolve and deter antisocial behaviour and noise complaints within communities across all housing tenures. In general, the Act provides local authorities with the powers to deal with antisocial behaviour as they see fit according to the needs of their communities which includes supporting role of Environmental Health in respect noise nuisance witnessing from non domestic settings. The Safer Neighbourhood Team work with our CPP partners, and in particular, Police Scotland and Scottish Fire Rescue Service on delivering strategic direction, interventions, and enforcement activity in relation to ASB, and fulfilling statutory duties.

On reviewing the incidents/cases and ward information of the 9 Wards. Linlithgow and East Livingston Wards has the lowest reported incidents/cases and therefore the justification to reduce by one officer would be manageable. 7 day shift pattern could still be maintained. Pattern of incident reporting has not changed significantly since the last TYC. Due to a long term absence, the Service has in fact been operating with 8 officers for the last 2 years with no impact on service delivery.

As no impact on any protected group is anticipated a full IIA is not necessary

The proposed savings is a review of supplies & services budgets following implementation of the new team structure to remove spend which is not required for delivery of the Service. The proposed saving will not impact on service delivery and will not impact on any protected group, therefore full IIA not necessary.

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Interim Head of Housing, Customer & Building Services
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023